

30) 202085 Private Harvey George **WINKWORTH**  
(St Mary's Aldermaston)

**Kia** 31/07/17, **Age** 24  
6th Bn. Royal Berkshire Regiment

**Born** Aldermaston  
**Enlisted** Reading  
**Residence** Hungerford

**Awarded:** British War Medal  
Victory Medal

**Date arrived in theatre of war:** not known

As with a majority of soldiers who served in the second half of the Great War, it becomes more difficult to determine details of their early careers from surviving military records. Harvey Winkworth's medal entitlement would show that he had come to France at some time after 1<sup>st</sup> January 1916. However, his regimental number is that of a battalion of the Territorial Force. Its members underwent a change in their regimental numbers in early 1917 from four- and five-digit numbers to six-digit ones beginning with '2'. The fact that Harvey Winkworth only has a single six-digit regimental number indicates he only arrived in France from January/February 1917 or even later.

Following the massively successful Battle of Messines in June 1917 (see James Blake's file), there came one of the most tragic 'if onlys' from the British perspective. Following their defeat at Messines, the Germans expected the British to immediately widen their attack to the north and break out of the Ypres Salient – they already knew they could not hope to prevent this and feared what this might mean.

However, Plumer's planning for Messines in June had not been effectively linked to Haig's planning for the main planned breakout from the Ypres Salient. There now followed a critical six-week lull, in which very little happened apart in the Ypres salient apart from Haig bringing up the men and materiel needed for the main attack at the end of July. This gave the Germans the required time to examine what little had been successful in their defence at Messines against such a well-planned, thorough and flexible British artillery preparation. What had worked very well was where there had been concrete blockhouses situated between the lines, these had protected the defending troops who were then able to emerge after the British bombardment had passed on behind them and they would slow down the British advance.

In those six weeks, the Germans had been busy building as many concrete blockhouses as possible immediately behind their front lines and further back to try and stem the expected British attack. Six weeks was enough, the British would now face a string of almost impregnable concrete forts all along their line of attack and in depth too.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire would be in support to the lead battalions on the first day of the battle (31<sup>st</sup> July 1917) in the 'Sanctuary Wood' area. To this end, the battalion had spent the whole of the month of June 1917 and up to the eve of the attack behind the lines at Steenvoorde training for this attack. Just twenty days before the attack, the battalion had received 200 fresh new troops out from England, quite possibly including Harvey Winkworth. They began their march to the attack assembly trench on 28/6/17 from Steenvoorde, through Reninghelst, Ouderdom to Zillebeke and thence to the Assembly trenches on the evening of the attack 30/6/1917. For new and existing troops, this very long march with all the amount of equipment carried would have been very trying indeed – most would have felt relieved to get into their assembly trenches, for a time at least.

Haig's planning for this 'Third Battle of Ypres' cannot be said to have been lacking in detail. The war diary of the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire contains no less than 30 pages of detailed

operation orders for their attack in which it was planned tanks would be used. Here was the basic plan:

6TH 'SERVICE' BATTALION ROYAL BERKSHIRE REGT.

OPERATION ORDER No 14. 21st July 1917.

- INFORMATION. 1. (a) The II Corps in conjunction with other corps on its right and left, will attack the enemy in front of it on Z day.
- (b) The II Corps attack will be carried out as follows- The 24th Division will attack on the right, the 30th Division supported by the 18th Division in the centre, and the 8th Division supported by the 25th Division on the left.
- (c) The attack of the 30th Division on the BLACK line will be carried out by the 21st Inf Bde on the right, and the 90th Inf Bde on the left. The attack of the 89th Inf Bde on the GREEN line will be carried out by the 20th K.L.R. on the right, and the 17th K.L.R. on the left. These Bns will pass through the troops which have captured the BLACK line, namely the 90th Inf Bde.
- (d) The attack of the 8th Division on the GREEN line will be carried out by the 25th Inf Bde, the 2nd Lincoln Regt being on the right as far as the GREEN line, and the 2nd R.Berks from the GREEN line to the RED line.
- (e) The attack of the 18th Division on the GREEN and RED lines will be carried out by the 53rd Inf Bde (supported by the 54th Inf Bde) and will pass through the 30th Division ~~and~~ troops to do so.
- (f) The 53rd Inf Bde will attack with Suffolks on the right and the R.Berks on the left, the Norfolk Regt will follow the assaulting Bns and will consolidate and garrison strong points 1 to 12 and A.B.C.D., the approximate positions of which are shown on Map "A". One Coy of the Essex R. will be detailed for Mopping up to each Bn. Two machine Guns and one Stokes ~~mortar~~ Mortar will be attached to the Bn. <sup>and 1 Squadron 11th Yorks Dragoons.</sup> One section of 4 tanks will operate with the Bde in the attack in each phase. The attack will not be held up for the arrival of tanks. The tank map showing routes and objectives will be issued as soon as received.

ORDERS TO FIGHTING 7.  
TROOPS

FIRST PHASE.

- (a) The assaulting Coys will fight their way through and capture the GREEN line, which they will consolidate and hold. A Coy will render every assistance to the Coy of Suffolks on their right, especially at the Strong point at J.9.c.3.6. The objective of the 3rd wave will be the BROWN Line, and of the 4th wave, the YELLOW line, unless these waves are required to reinforce the assaulting waves. During the advance to the GREEN line, supporting troops will watch carefully that no gaps occur, especially on flanks. Should any such occur, they will immediately take steps to fill them. In the event of the attack on our left being held up, the supports will form a defensive flank. As soon as the GREEN line has been captured and covering troops pushed out, two machine guns attached will move up to a ~~selected~~ selected position in the GREEN line to assist in the defence of that line. Similarly the attached mortar will move up to the BROWN line, and the Officer will get in touch with the left Coy H.Q., and take up a position to assist in the defence of the GREEN line, and if necessary, the left flank.
- (b) The Moppers up will be divided into 3 parties :-  
Party "A" will clear the area forward of the BLACK line as far as and inclusive of the YELLOW line  
Party "B" will clear the area between the yellow line as far as and inclusive of the BROWN line.  
Party "C" will clear the area between the BROWN and GREEN line, both exclusive.

No minor detail would be left out. For signalling:

PIGEONS. 9. 3 pairs of pigeons will be allotted to 6.R.BERKS.R.

Additional equipment to be carried:

Picks, shovels. 33% of support and Reserve platoons and 50% of support and reserve Coys carry picks and shovels at the rate of 1 pick; 4 shovels. Total for each Bn. 30 120.

Sandbags. Will be carried at the rate of two per man by all men of the Brigade taking part in the advance with the exception of the men of the two carrying Coys of the Essex Regt.

Dress. Fighting order - Haversack on back - except in case of carrying parties (Box Respirators at the alert) Officers will be dressed exactly as the men. Sticks are not to be carried.  
Rations for 2 day and an iron ration will be carried by every officer and man. All water bottles to be full at Zero plus 2 hours

Artillery support:

2. A map shewing barrage lines and timings can be seen at Bn H.Q.; from this it will be noted that  
(a) the general rate of advance will be 100 yards in 4 minutes.  
(b) There will be halts on the various objectives as follows :-  
On the BLUE line - Approx 30 minutes.  
On the BLACK line - 4 hours.  
On the GREEN line - 1 to 1½ hours.  
(before patrols can go out)

3. The protective barrage will rest, in the case of the BLUE and BLACK lines about 300 yards beyond these lines, but in the case of the GREEN line about 500 yards beyond it.

Contact with aeroplanes monitoring the progress of the advancing infantry:

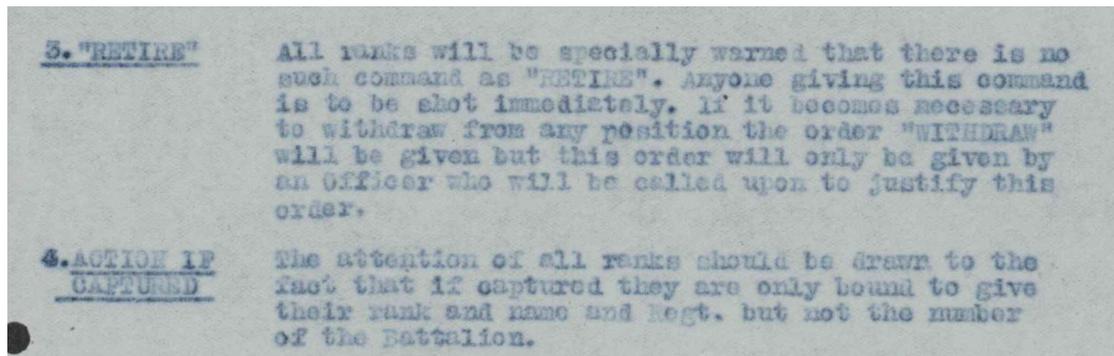
CO-OPERATION WITH CONTACT AEROPLANES.

Arrangements for communication between advanced troops and aeroplanes will be as follows :-

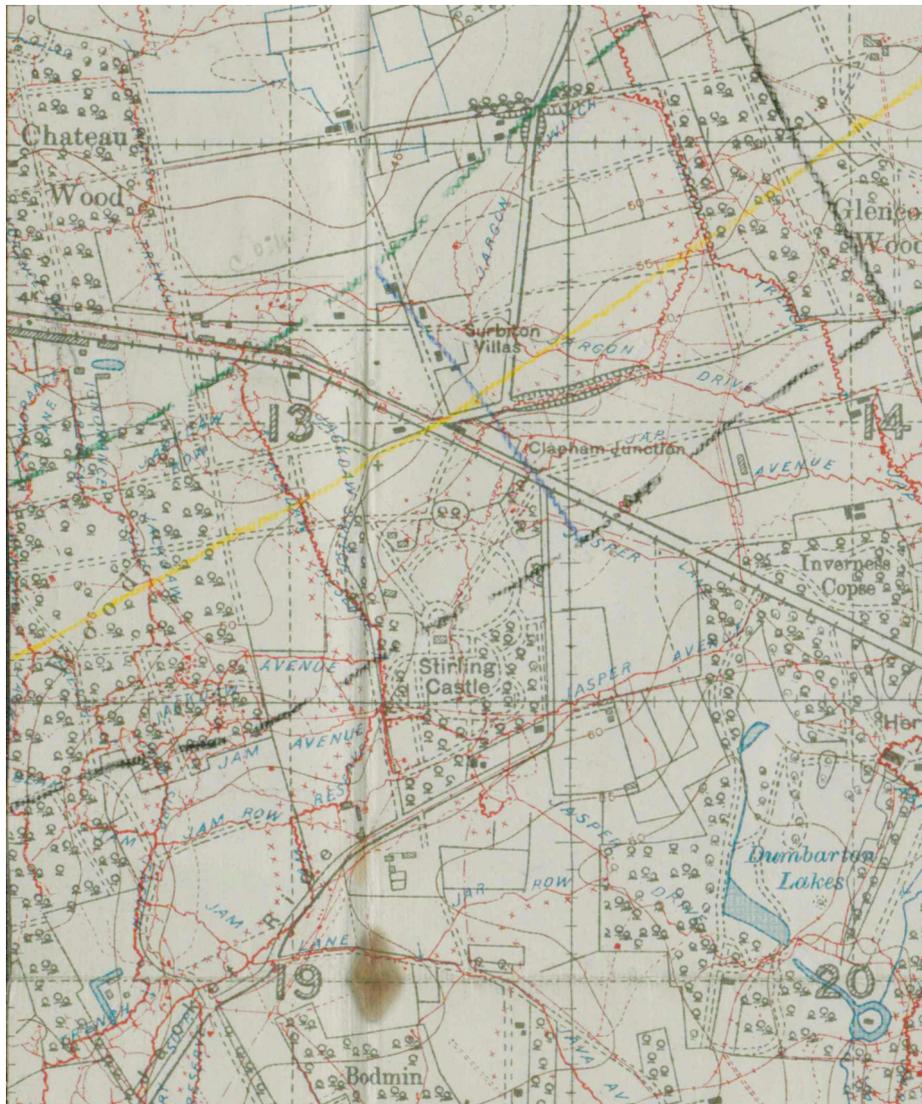
1. Contact aeroplanes will be sent over the lines to receive signals as to the position of the leading troops at the following hours -  
(a) at 15 minutes after reaching the BLUE line.  
(b) at 30 minutes after reaching the BLACK line.  
(c) at 30 minutes after reaching the GREEN line.
2. Contact aeroplanes will be distinguished by two black plates fixed to the rear of the plane (x - x) viz :-

These machines will be furnished with wireless but will only use it for the purpose of reporting a counter attack.

And if things were to start to go wrong...



The following trench map shows the area to be attacked on the morning of 31/7/1917:



Trench Map 31/7/17 – Green, Yellow and Black lines indicated intended successive objectives. The 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire being involved in the area immediately around the figure '13'

Although the war diary does contain a timed brief account of the attack made by the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire this day, there is also a very detailed account written shortly afterward that summarises the events of this tragic failed attack:

NARRATIVE OF OPERATIONS 31st JULY 1917.  
-o-

The Battalion moved from DICKEBUSCH CAMP on the night of the 30th July 1917. to march up by platoons to the assembly area in I.17.d. and I.23.a. and c. The march up was fairly quiet. The Battalion suffered 2 Officers and 17 O.Rs. casualties. The assembly trenches were not very much shelled during the night. The British barrage opened at 3.50 am. The enemy put down his barrage chiefly on No-Man's-Land and the British Front line. A few heavy shells were sent into the assembly area but caused no casualties.

For this attack, the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire would be in support and not part of the first waves of the attack. Still they would suffer casualties – simply moving up...

A message was received from Bde. H.Q. at 5 am. that the BLUE Line had been captured.

Things looked to be going well...

Unofficial information was received by telephone at 6.50 am. that the BLACK line had been reported by aeroplane as captured. Officers Patrols under 2/Lt. G.H.TIGAR and 2/Lt.H.R.HOOPER had been sent forward at 5.50 am to get in touch with the 17th Manchester Regt who were attacking the BLACK line in order to get definite information of the situation. Report by Patrol Commander is attached. 2/Lt.H.R.Hooper was wounded on the way up and no report was received from him.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire were now making checks on the progress of troops ahead of them ahead of their own planned attack...

At 7.15.am.the Battalion commenced to advance in Artillery formation towards the forming up line. Enemy shelling was patchy and confined to the left of the Battalion route, and an easy advance to the forming up line was anticipated. The advance was uneventful as far as the portion of SANCTUARY WOOD in I.13.c. where the Battalion came under a fairly heavy Machine Gun barrage and a barrage of 77 mm. It was concluded that the Machine Gun barrage was indirect fire as casualties did not appear to be numerous. The artillery barrage was most severe, but the advance was continued until the Eastern edge of SANCTUARY WOOD was reached. Here the barrage was severe and now appeared to be directed on the troops advancing through it. In reaching JACKDAW RESERVE TRENCH no detachments of the 30th Div. Assaulting Battn (17th Manchesters) were met with. A M.G. Detachment of the 30th Div. was found here. Now definite information could be gained but verbal reports from stray men stated Bosch M.G. were still active from INVERNESS COPSE and from bend in YPRES-MENIN Road.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire now started to make their advance to their appointed jumping off points at the western edge of Sanctuary Wood ready begin to move through it. Ahead of them, other British troops had been now spotted as they neared to the eastern edge of the wood and had come under enemy fire. Things would now begin to slow down...

Under these circumstances it was determined to continue the advance to the forming up line. As soon as the YPRES-MEMIN road was reached in J.13.b. the Battalion came under heavy direct Machine Gun fire. It was then evident that the BLACK line had not been taken. No troops of the 30th Div. were met in front of JACKDAW RESERVE TRENCH. It was decided to endeavour to push on so as to get to the forming up line (JARGON TRENCH) in time to attack and if necessary to take any small party of enemy that might be holding out and force a passage to the JARGON TRENCH line. No assistance could be got from Tanks which were all held up by the Bog on the Southern side of the YPRES-MEMIN road in J.13.b. The advance was resumed in extended order and immediately heavy Machine Gun fire was put down.

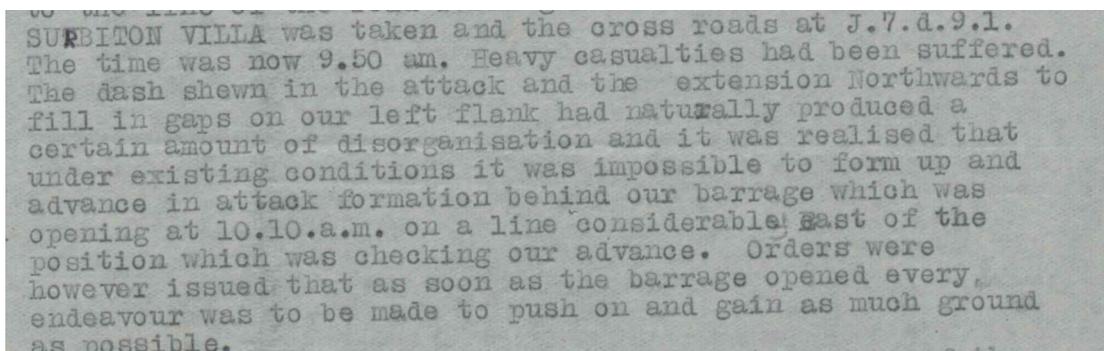
Things were now starting to go wrong, the advance troops ahead of the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire were effectively being pinned down, this would now make the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire moving across open ground a very suitable target if they advanced...the tanks were also proving useless in clearing the way, having been bogged down in the mud...

It was now 8.50 am. and the Battalion had to be formed up by 10.10.am. It was, therefore, determined to push on under cover of rifle fire. The M.G.Section and Trench Mortar Guns attached to the Battalion had not arrived. Under support of L.Gun and Rifle fire together with the T.M.Bty attached Suffolk Regt, the advance was resumed to about the line J.13.b.5.9½.-J.13.b.6.3. Junction of YPRES-MEMIN road with Brigade Southern Boundary at J.13.b.5.0. under heavy M.G.fire, from a S.P. at J.14.a.3.2½. and the Western end of GLENCORSE WOOD. British troops could be seen on the line JABBER DRIVE and at WESTHOEK. There were no troops of the 30th Div. met beyond the JACKDAW RESERVE line. A determined effort was then made to push forward to the JARGON TRENCH line. Two platoons of D.Coy. were sent out on the North side of the road running from J.7.d.3.0. to cross roads at J.7.a.9.1. to get in touch with British troops at JABBER DRIVE. This gained touch with 2nd R.Berks R. at J.7.d.3.7. There were no British troops between the ~~thick~~ thicket at J.7.d.8.5. and the cross roads at J.7.d.9.1. Platoons were extended and the advance maintained. JARGON SWITCH was taken to the line of the road running N and S at J.13.b. ~~cross roads~~ was taken and the cross roads at J.7.d.9.1.



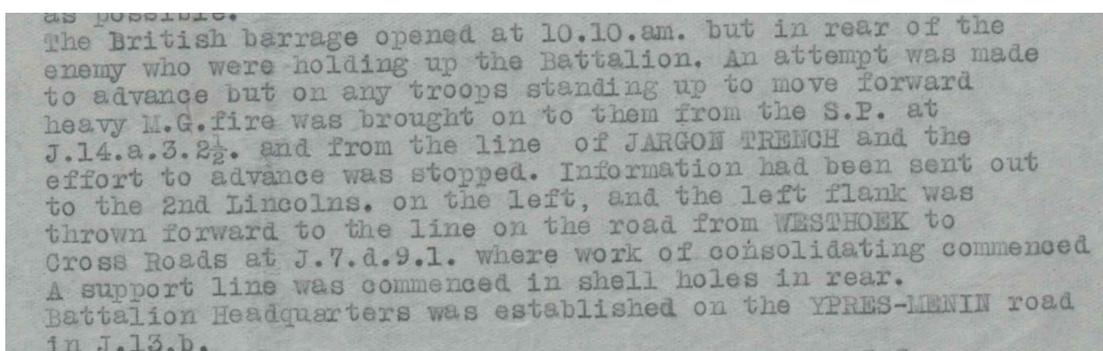
Trenches in Sanctuary Wood 1917

Ahead of the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire things were indeed coming to a halt, just advancing to their expected attack positions was becoming practically impossible for them, the carefully worked out plan was falling apart...



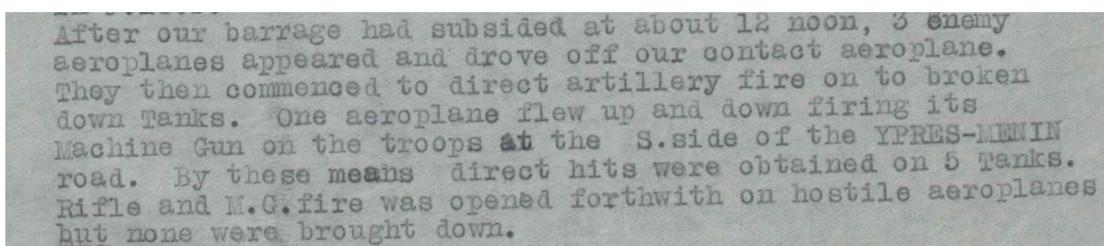
SUBBITON VILLA was taken and the cross roads at J.7.d.9.1. The time was now 9.50 am. Heavy casualties had been suffered. The dash shown in the attack and the extension Northwards to fill in gaps on our left flank had naturally produced a certain amount of disorganisation and it was realised that under existing conditions it was impossible to form up and advance in attack formation behind our barrage which was opening at 10.10.a.m. on a line considerable east of the position which was checking our advance. Orders were however issued that as soon as the barrage opened every endeavour was to be made to push on and gain as much ground as possible.

It was now realised it would be impossible to follow the plan for the attack, the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire would have to do what it could to try and continue the advance...



The British barrage opened at 10.10.am. but in rear of the enemy who were holding up the Battalion. An attempt was made to advance but on any troops standing up to move forward heavy M.G. fire was brought on to them from the S.P. at J.14.a.3.2 1/2. and from the line of JARGON TRENCH and the effort to advance was stopped. Information had been sent out to the 2nd Lincolns. on the left, and the left flank was thrown forward to the line on the road from WESTHOEK to Cross Roads at J.7.d.9.1. where work of consolidating commenced. A support line was commenced in shell holes in rear. Battalion Headquarters was established on the YPRES-MENIN road in J.13.b.

The planned supporting artillery barrage for the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire now opened up as per the plan, however this would prove useless as they were now not in the right position...The Germans were still holding the ground between them and their planned jumping off positions. All the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire could do was sit hopelessly and wait watching their useless barrage. As before on the Somme the previous year, too rigid a plan and inflexibility if things went wrong were lessons that had not been learned...



After our barrage had subsided at about 12 noon, 3 enemy aeroplanes appeared and drove off our contact aeroplane. They then commenced direct artillery fire on to broken down Tanks. One aeroplane flew up and down firing its Machine Gun on the troops at the S. side of the YPRES-MENIN road. By these means direct hits were obtained on 5 Tanks. Rifle and M.G. fire was opened forthwith on hostile aeroplanes but none were brought down.

Even more frustratingly, the British contact aircraft monitoring progress of the advance had been driven off by enemy aircraft, there was now no way to contact the artillery to adjust their range to try and change matters – they could now only fire blind in the hope the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire were indeed pursuing this covering barrage to screen their advance. It would be about this time that the pigeons would be used to try and get vital messages back.

To add insult to injury, the German aircraft were now transmitting coordinates to their own artillery for suitable targets i.e. five British tanks bogged down in the mud and masses of British infantry being held back now as static targets...

The enemy's artillery fire was undoubtedly controlled by their aeroplanes, the alterations in ranges and targets immediately on their planes arriving was most marked. The troops in the open S. of the YPRES-MENIN road had casualties inflicted on them. None of our aeroplanes were visible. The enemy planes remained active until 4 pm. when the mist rendered observed shooting impossible, and aeroplanes flying 200 yards up could not be seen.

The frustration felt by the British is palpable in this description of events. At 4pm a mist started to envelope the battlefield only making things worse...

The line consolidated was as follows:-  
The road at J.7.d.98.25 to cross roads at J.7.d.9.1. JARGON SWITCH to about J.13.b.9.6. Track and road junction at J.13.b.9.5. E. side of SURBITON VILLA, where touch was gained with the 8th Suffolks.  
The line ~~was~~ held with A and B Coys. on the right. D.Coy with a Mopping Up Coy. of the 10th Essex on the left. C.Coy. in support in shell holes about 100 yards in rear.  
A platoon of Norfolk's rendered great assistance by digging a S.P. at about J.7.d.8.4. and so filling in gap between 6th R.Berks R.lines and 2nd Lincolns. The immediate left of the Norfolk's was held by a party of 17th Manchesters who arrived about 4 pm.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire had not and could not make an attack, they simply had had to stay where they were, still even short of their original jumping off positions. Ahead of them, there had been some gains by other troops, but not the breakthrough that had been planned...

at J.13.b. The enemy was reported to be massing for counter attack on one occasion at about 3 pm. S.O.S. was fired and a strong artillery barrage put down on GLENCORSE WOOD. The counter attack did not materialise.

It could be expected that after any attack, the Germans might counter-attack to recapture any lost ground. However, given the severity of this British bombardment and the expectation that there would likely be masses of British troops ready to cut down any such counter attacks, the Germans thought better of it to conserve their troops for the next day.

The remainder of the evening and night was quiet except for Machine Gun fire and heavy and continuous sniping from which the Battalion suffered many casualties.  
Three Officers were killed viz:-  
Capt. A.H. Hudson.  
Lieut H.S. Tindall.  
2/Lt. H.G.N. Tarrant. M.C.  
Casualties were estimated at about 250, a large number of whom were killed.  
The Battalion was relieved by the 17th King's Liverpool Regt by 2.30.a.m. The march back was uneventful.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire had trained for this attack for two months; they had never even got as far as their jumping off trenches let alone advanced to the attack. They had been forced to maintain exposed in their positions in force throughout the day simply taking casualties to enemy shell fire.

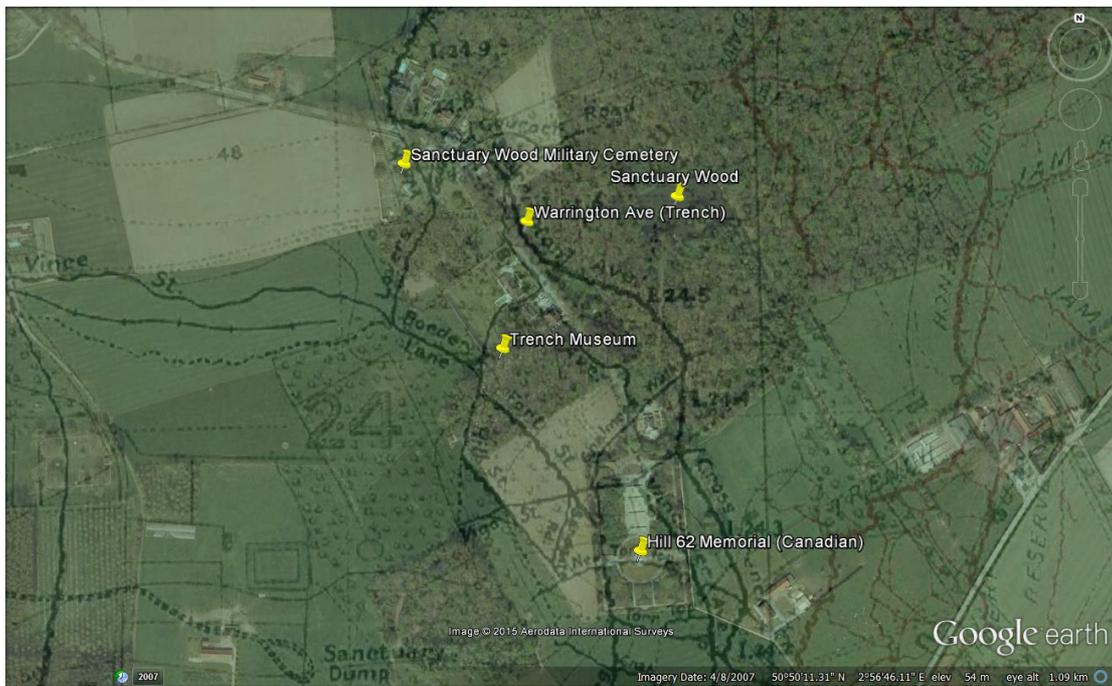
The casualties on the day for the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire were:

Officers: 3 killed, 5 wounded

Other ranks: 35 killed, 6 died of wounds, 27 missing, 177 wounded, 1 wounded and missing.

Pte Harvey Winkworth was one of those men of the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire killed during this failed attack...

Along the Western Front, there are few remains left of the original trenches that can be seen and visited today. The land encompassing 'Sanctuary Wood' was owned before the war by the Schier family. They returned to it after the war to reclaim it. Here they left the trenches as they were and here they remain still. The whole is now a privately owned museum visited by thousands of people each year.



**Preserved Trenches/shell-holes in Sanctuary Wood today**

These trenches are some of the clearest and accurate reminders of the fighting in these places, indeed where Harvey Winkworth was killed on this first day of 'Third Ypres'.

Fortunately, his body was recovered and identified and he was buried in the nearby:

SANCTUARY WOOD CEMETERY, Belgium, IV. N. 19.

**SON OF EDWARD CHARLES AND LAURA LOUISA WINKWORTH, OF ROSE COTTAGE,  
ALDERMASTON, BERKS.**

## SANCTUARY WOOD CEMETERY



### **Location Information**

Sanctuary Wood Cemetery is located 5 Kms east of Ieper town centre, on the Canadalaan, a road leading from the Meenseweg (N8), connecting Ieper to Menen.

### **Historical Information**

Sanctuary Wood is one of the larger woods in the commune of Zillebeke. It was named in November 1914, when it was used to screen troops behind the front line. It was the scene of fighting in September 1915 and was the centre of the Battle of Mount Sorrel (2-13 June 1916) involving the 1st and 3rd Canadian Divisions.

There were three Commonwealth cemeteries at Sanctuary Wood before June 1916, all made in May-August 1915. The first two were on the western end of the wood, the third in a clearing further east. All were practically obliterated in the Battle of Mount Sorrel, but traces of the second were found and it became the nucleus of the present Sanctuary Wood Cemetery.

At the Armistice, the cemetery contained 137 graves. From 1927 to 1932, Plots II-V were added and the cemetery extended as far as 'Maple Avenue', when graves were brought in from the surrounding battlefields. They came mainly from the communes immediately surrounding Ypres, but a few were taken from Nieuport (on the coast) and other smaller cemeteries.



202085 PRIVATE  
G. WINKWORTH  
ROYAL BERKSHIRE REGIMENT  
31ST JULY 1917 AGE 24



UNTIL THE DAY BREAK  
AND THE SHADOWS FLEE AWAY